

Montana Supreme Court Commission on Self-Represented Litigants
Minutes from June 20, 2007

Attendance:

| <u>Helena</u> | <u>Billings</u> | <u>Missoula</u> | <u>Kalispell</u> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Judy Meadows | Hon. Russ Fagg | Jim Taylor | Peg Allison |
| Hon. Michele Snowberger | Corbin Howard | Shirley Foust | |
| Tammy Hinderman | | | |
| Ann Gilkey | | | |
| Tara Veazey | | | |
| Tim Little | | | |
| Chris Manos | | | |
| Neil Haight | | | |

Meeting called to order at 1:30 PM.

1) Update on LegalZoom.

- We suggested \$5000.
- Their Counter offer \$1500 + \$500 for any non-profit litigation fund.
- Where is money to go? Suggestion is to Justice Foundation. Judy will check with Justice Gray.
- We will counter with \$3500.

2) Agenda Item One: Approval of minutes from May 2, 2007, meeting.

- Minutes approved.

3) Agenda Item Five: General Discussion on oversight and direction of Self-Help Appropriation for FY08/09.

- Tara, Ann, Tammy, Judy met with representatives from the State Bar, the Montana Justice Foundation and Montana Legal Services and Lois Menzies for general discussion about control of money regarding the Pro Bono Coordinator. It's suggested that the coordinator be hired by the Court so that their can be closer cooperation with the Pro Se Coordinator.
- State Justice Foundation has proposed that Pro Bono Coordinator be funded at \$61,000.
- If money comes from Justice Foundation, money goes to the court.
- Foundation requested letter with results of meeting.
- Position will probably be \$61,000, ¾ time with benefits.
Will oversee volunteers for pro bono

Discussion on Self Help Coordinator

- Work on forms; In addition to the Hot Docs software there is A2J, which some people like better.
- Great need to create more forms, videos on our websites, host clinics
- Dean of the Law School is interested in participating.
Student researchers for the fall and spring classes

Contract Officer would set up self-help centers staffed by Pro Bono attorneys.

Taylor said that whatever help the law school can provide, they will. The Dean also offers their help and support.

- Judge Fagg suggests that even though there are 3-4 centers and good forms, more pro se litigants will fall through the cracks.
- HB 60
- All pro se money should not go to law school, nor bulk of it to Legal Services.
- Tara wants person doing forms housed at Legal Services. Gives example of housing forms. It's suggested that we need forms for both parties in many conflict situations
- Coordinator can supervise forms, videos, work stations/self help centers, evaluation of project by self and client
- Control needs to be under Commission
Person for forms under Legal Services
Cooperation with Law School for self help centers
Students can use remote access, webcam, instant messaging and other resources
Student training can be in grant request
- Coordinator can use projects already created by other states; evaluation needs to help the courts and legislature understand benefits of pro se projects
- Judy and Tara need to be on hiring committee
Person needs to be an attorney with good networking skills
Commission supervision not under Court Administration
Person housed in Law Library
Use Commission on Practice for model as to how staff person will work with Commission
Commission will give deliverables
- Pro Bono work statewide
Coordinator work with Bar Association and Patty Fein
Letters from district court judges could go out with pro bono packets
- Judy will send memo to Commission to review what she will present to Court

4) Agenda Item Four: Status of Vista Volunteer: Veazey/Little

- Vista Volunteer was going to be assigned to Commission but no one has applied
Will re-advertise in the fall for January placement

5) Agenda Item Six: Waiver of fee form – Judge Snowberger

- Discussion of Gallatin County and forms which come from AG's. Needs to be form which all counties will use
Form needs to be added to dissolution packrt
- Legal Services is going to be working on legislation for standardizing forms

6) New Agenda Item: Revisiting Clerks of Court training

- Clerks of Court need additional training
Judge Snowberger needs money for traveling - Legal Zoom money could be used for training costs
WebEx is a possibility for training

7) Agenda Item Two: Report on California conference on Self-Represented Litigants

- Brief report on conference and programs that can be adopted here
There is a website from the conference in CA

9) Agenda item Seven: Next meeting date

- Next meeting date and a time for retreat will be set later.
Retreat for Sept 12-14 is cancelled.
- New Item for agenda – Ghost Writing and legal advice/accountability
Two entities affected by ghost writing 1) Ethics committee and 2) Committee on Unauthorized Practice

10) Meeting adjourned at 3:15 p.m.